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Statement submitted by Indian Dreams Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Statement

The Millennium Development Goals are playing a significant role in spreading awareness about education throughout the world but there are still big tasks ahead to reach out to the maximum number of children, provide them with an education and practise gender equality for accessing education in the post-2015 era.

The Indian Government is making progress in providing education to all children and has allocated a huge budget to address this issue; however, with all of the efforts at the regional, national and global levels, there is still a big gap between the present situation and the desired outcomes and targets of the Millennium Development Goals. India faces a shortage of classrooms and teachers and poor infrastructure such as a lack of drinking water and separate toilets for girls. The most challenging issue is the lack of awareness among communities about their children's education.

What is the missing link that continues to hold back the Indian education system? Accessibility and the lack of awareness could both be factors. The Government's indifference could also be blamed. But what if it is the parents? What if it is the result of a gender bias and discrimination between girls and boys?

While the above reasons all contribute to keeping the country's literacy rate below acceptable levels, the first and most crucial problem starts at home. Indian Dreams Foundation is a non-governmental organization based in India that works on education and gender equality issues and addresses them through various programmes and activities. It is well connected with the community in which it operates its education programmes, which include community mobilization schemes, workshops and direct intervention with the community to guide people through the education system and facilities that the Government provides for children.

Indian Dreams Foundation works in partnership with many stakeholders, such as the district education department, local government and communities, to run school reform programmes. The objectives of such programmes are to enhance the quality of education, reduce dropout rates, support infrastructure in schools and protect children from child labour. Indian Dreams Foundation is also implementing programmes for girls and addressing issues through education support and skills-based training programmes.

Although there are many challenges ahead, we can see gains in the future with regard to the Millennium Development Goals thanks to multi-stakeholder partnerships at the regional, national and international levels that will help to solve complexities on many issues and address development challenges. The advantages of multi-stakeholder partnerships are:

- They promote inclusiveness and equity in the drawing up and implementation of programmes at different levels
- They promote grass-roots mobilization and participation, which raises community awareness about the need to address the Millennium Development Goals
- They promote the development of focused and holistic action plans at the global level
- They foster the sharing of skills and innovation
- They encourage good governance and transparency